

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Blue Ridge Forever Success

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

45, 000 acres, 70 square miles, an area nearly 1/10th the size of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. That's how much land has been protected by Blue Ridge Forever, a coalition of area landtrusts now in their final year of a five-year effort to protect 50,000 mountain acres.

According to the coalition, between 1987 and 2007 an average of 325 acres of natural land in North Carolina was converted to residential or commercial use a day. 325 acres a day. At the outset of the Blue Ridge Forever effort, the participating land conservancies came together to identify the most important areas to them – places they didn't want to see become part of this statistic. These included areas of great biodiversity, areas that help protect streams and water quality, lands where people love to enjoy the outdoors, and farming areas that have been worked for generations and where people want to see that tradition continue and not succumb to development. The land trusts wanted to concentrate their protection efforts on these undeveloped areas that meant the most to people and are key parts of our rich natural and cultural heritage.

The effort has been a great success and the coalition is well on track to meet their goal. However, they aren't across the line yet. If you're interested in learning more about their efforts to protect 50,000 western North Carolina acres, then visit www.blueridgeforever.info.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.